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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4594  
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 6987  
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 4347  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 8232  
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 5474  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2699  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 2876  
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4776  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 5335  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 9942  
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0464  
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL  
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 002186

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/09/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BL](#)  
SUBJECT: MILITARY-INDIGENOUS PARADE NON-VIOLENT

REF: A. LA PAZ 2141  
[1](#)B. LA PAZ 2156

Classified By: Ecopol Chief Mike Hammer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) The August 7 Armed Forces Day parade held at El Trompillo military airport in Santa Cruz went off peacefully (Reftel A). Approximately 6,000 spectators watched thirty indigenous groups (including the poncho rojos) march with the Bolivian Armed Forces. President Morales, Vice President Garcia Linera, Minister of Defense Walker San Miguel, and Santa Cruz Prefect Ruben Costas sat together in the official grandstand. The Santa Cruz Civic Committee, Santa Cruz Business Chamber (CAINCO), and the Central Workers Union (COB) did not participate in the parade. The indigenous marchers were housed on base and not allowed to go into the city of Santa Cruz. Contrary to GOB statements that the marchers financed their own participation, the press reported that the Armed Forces paid each indigenous marcher a daily per diem of roughly \$10 USD. President Morales spoke for twenty minutes, much shorter than the nearly four-hour speech he had delivered in Sucre the day before (Reftel B). Government media outlets trumpeted the parade as a sign of Bolivian unity.

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COMMENT  
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[1](#)2. (C) The credit for the lack of violence during the parade goes to the Bolivian military and Santa Cruz leaders. The military, in charge of the parade, made a virtue out of necessity; keeping a tight rein on the indigenous marchers and restricting them to the base outside of town to avoid possible conflict in the city. Only the Bolivian flag was allowed to be displayed during the ceremony, setting aside more regional symbols such as the whipala and cruceno flags. In the days leading up to the parade, Santa Cruz Prefect Ruben Costas repeatedly called for calm, and his attendance at the event was meant to defuse regional tensions. CAINCO President Gabriel Dabdoub told Emboff that CAINCO, the Civic Committee, and the COB decided not to participate in order to keep the peace, adding that "it would not have been prudent to send our people to march in that environment."

13. (C) Comment continued: President Morales scored a public relations victory by showing the country the ability his government has to host an indigenous parade at the seat of its opposition. Two underlying messages were that President Morales' government is composed of and represents the indigenous, and that even the Armed Forces are subject to the control of indigenous social organizations. Morales' short speech and lack of verbal attacks can be partly attributed to the poor reception he received the day before in Sucre (Reftel B). End Comment.  
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